

5 Steps to Ready

The effects of climate change are here, and so are the health challenges caused by extreme weather. Heat waves are among the most dangerous disasters. Protect yourself and your family with these easy steps.

1. Make a plan

- Know where you'll go to cool down if you don't have air conditioning or the power goes out. Public cooling centers, public libraries, shopping malls and movie theaters could be options.
- If possible, buy a generator in case of power outages.
- If you rely on electricity-dependent medical equipment, identify a battery-powered alternative, or identify a location with power where you could relocate during a power outage.
- Identify people in your family at high risk from heat waves and check on them regularly.

2. Build a kit

- Keep drinking water on hand. If possible, keep the water refrigerated or frozen.
- Bring bottled water when using public transportation or spending time outdoors.
- Keep fans in the house, including battery-powered fans in case of power outages. Fans become less effective at cooling above 95F; using wet cloths or mist on your skin while using a fan can help.

3. Keep at least seven days of medication on hand

- Work with your pharmacist and insurance company to secure extra doses of medications.
- Find out if any of your medications could impair your ability to tolerate the heat or make you more prone to heat stress or reduced sweating.
- Certain medical conditions can decrease the body's ability to regulate temperature and sweat. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to find out if you may be more at higher risk for heat illness.

4. Prepare to stay cool

- If you have an air conditioning system, replace the filters to help prevent it from failing.
- Wear loose, lightweight and light-colored clothing, and remember cool, damp cloths can help draw heat from the body.
- Avoid strenuous activities and, as much as possible, limit time outside.
- Drink plenty of water and electrolytes. Avoid caffeine, sodas and hot drinks.

5. Stay informed

- Learn to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and seek immediate medical attention if you, or someone you know, has any symptoms.
- Keep an eye on those most at risk for developing heat-related illness.
- Enable emergency alerts in your phone's settings to receive immediate government alerts.
- Download the FEMA app for immediate emergency alerts and the NOAA Weather Radio app for continuous national weather information.
- Learn more at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)